

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PALERMO 00269

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTION OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST COMMITTEE, PALERMO

REF: PALERMO 0254

FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS REGARDING THE CONSTITUTION OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST COMMITTEE IN PALERMO REPORTED REFTEL:

1. DR. SCHILLACI IS A YOUNG AND DYNAMIC SICILIAN, WHO HAS HELD MANAGERIAL POSITIONS IN BOTH THE PALERMO AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS. HE HAS ALSO BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS ENGAGED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. DURING THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1971/1972 SCHILLACI WAS SECRETARY OF A COMMITTEE OF LARGE FARMING CONCERNS AND LANDOWNERS, SUCCESSFULLY CAMPAIGNING IN FAVOR OF ALMIRANTE'S MSI.
2. EVIDENTLY SCHILLACI WAS RIGHT-LEANING AT THE TIME. IT APPEARS HE NOW HAS REVISED HIS RIGHTIST VIEWS BUT REMAINS VISCERALLY

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ANTI COMMUNIST. SCHILLACI SEEMS DETERMINED TO OPPOSE THE COMMUNISTS WITH ALL HIS MIGHT. DURING HIS CONVERSATION HE EVEN SUGGESTED A "COUP" SHOULD HIS EFFORTS FAIL, REMARKING THAT DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM ARE TOO PRECIOUS TO BE SACRIFICED TO A RED DICTATORSHIP, AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE PROTECTED BY A SEIZURE OF POWER BY NON-COMMUNISTS.

3. IF SCHILLACI APPEARS TO US SOMEWHAT OF AN EXTREMIST, THE 9 MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ARE NOT, ALL HOWEVER HAVING IN COMMON STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENTS, OFTEN EXPRESSED TO BOTH THE

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CONSUL GENERAL AND OTHER OFFICERS. THEIR PRESENCE IN THIS

COMMITTEE CONSTITUTES A CERTAIN GUARANTEE OF SERIOUSNESS AND
EFFICIENCY.

4. WE DID NOT ENCOURAGE SCHILLACI TO EXPECT U.S. SUPPORT.

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